

Am I bothered?

Selecting the right access equipment for the job is of paramount importance but particularly when working in industrial environments. The traditional factory shutdown/vacation periods may now generally be a thing of the past as companies look to carry out planned maintenance, renewals and improvement work over weekends, overnight or increasingly during normal working hours. Even so, selecting the correct equipment for the task can make the whole exercise easier, more efficient, quicker and safer.

With so many specific work at height jobs that need to be carried out across a wide range of industrial applications, access equipment manufacturers have continued to develop solutions and add equipment to their ranges. Yet despite the growing variety, performance and availability there are still far too many companies that persist in using access equipment that is wrong, inadequate, damaged or downright dangerous - often due to lack of planning and the fact that they can't be bothered to source specialist equipment.

Lack of planning leads to making do

In many countries powered access is now the predominant form of equipment for working at height. Certainly when you visit most big jobsites in Northern Europe and North America the number of aerial

work platforms - of one type or another - in use is huge. However move to smaller job sites, run by smaller contractors or on sites involving individual homes and powered access use is considerably less.

That same pattern is repeated when it comes to production facilities, warehouses, showrooms and other permanent establishments. The problem is most prevalent where a planned maintenance regime is not in place, so the requirement tends to be sporadic and unplanned, and with no relationship with a powered access supplier, the many 'quick-fix' alternatives such as inappropriate ladders, fork lifts - used in combination with the ubiquitous pallet - or other less suitable equipment seem like an expedient alternative.

In spite of this the range, performance and design of



The 4.2m working height Hugo Lift

powered access equipment for industrial applications has improved dramatically in recent years so there is no longer any excuse not to use an access platform indoors, even in very confined spaces with restricted access. There are very few cases where an aerial work platform with the right height, reach, dimensions and power source cannot be sourced locally.

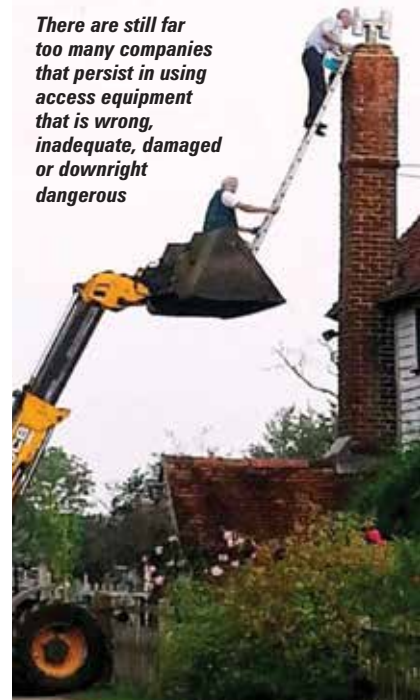
The most popular equipment to replace traditional access methods, such as ladders steps and trestles, are low level push-around or self-propelled platforms. Until now manufacturers of this type of equipment have tended to be limited to specialist, niche producers. However the sign that the low level push-around/self-propelled platform has 'come of age' and becoming a major market sector in its own right arrived when JLG acquired UK-based manufacturer Power Towers at the beginning of June. This is the second move by JLG into growing niche-type products - the first being its deal to source JLG branded spider lifts from Hinowa.

JLG goes low level

The deal is initially seen by JLG as a 'European play' and has been led by the head of JLG Europe, general manager Karel Huijser. "One thing that came up regularly from our customers was that the low level platform market was becoming an increasingly important market sector, and one that was not currently in the JLG portfolio," he

said. "And it was not too long before Power Towers came on the radar as a primary focus."

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(L-R) Sandra King of Power Towers, Karel Huijser of JLG with Brian King and Mark Richardson of Power Towers.

WE'RE LEAVING THE MAST IN THE PAST



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PLATFORM LENGTH

84.5"
PLATFORM PLUS EXTENSION

56"
MACHINE LENGTH

NOT YOUR TYPICAL SCISSOR LIFT.

In the past a compact footprint meant limited working space, but not anymore. Say hello to the HB-1230 the newest scissor lift from Custom Equipment, Inc. The Hy-Brid Lifts HB-1230 is designed and built to cut out the hassle of traditional mast lifts. Its full sized platform plus 30" deck extension provides over 7 feet of work space while maintaining a compact 56" x 30" footprint making it only 2" longer than competitive 12 foot vertical mast machines.

The HB-1230 weighs 1610 lbs. and can lift 550 lbs., making it lighter and stronger than vertical mast lifts. Additionally the HB-1230 features an innovative point-and go zero turn steer system which is fully proportional allowing for quick and fluid maneuverability around any job site. The days of jerky steering and limited platform space are over.

While Power Towers is the market leader in this sector, it has no presence in the massive North American market. Having access to the JLG brand and dealer/customer network, will open doors into a market that would have taken years to penetrate. The same might apply to parts of Asia. The move is likely to prove to be a major step forward in the acceptance of this relatively new product type.



JLG acquired Power Towers at the beginning of June

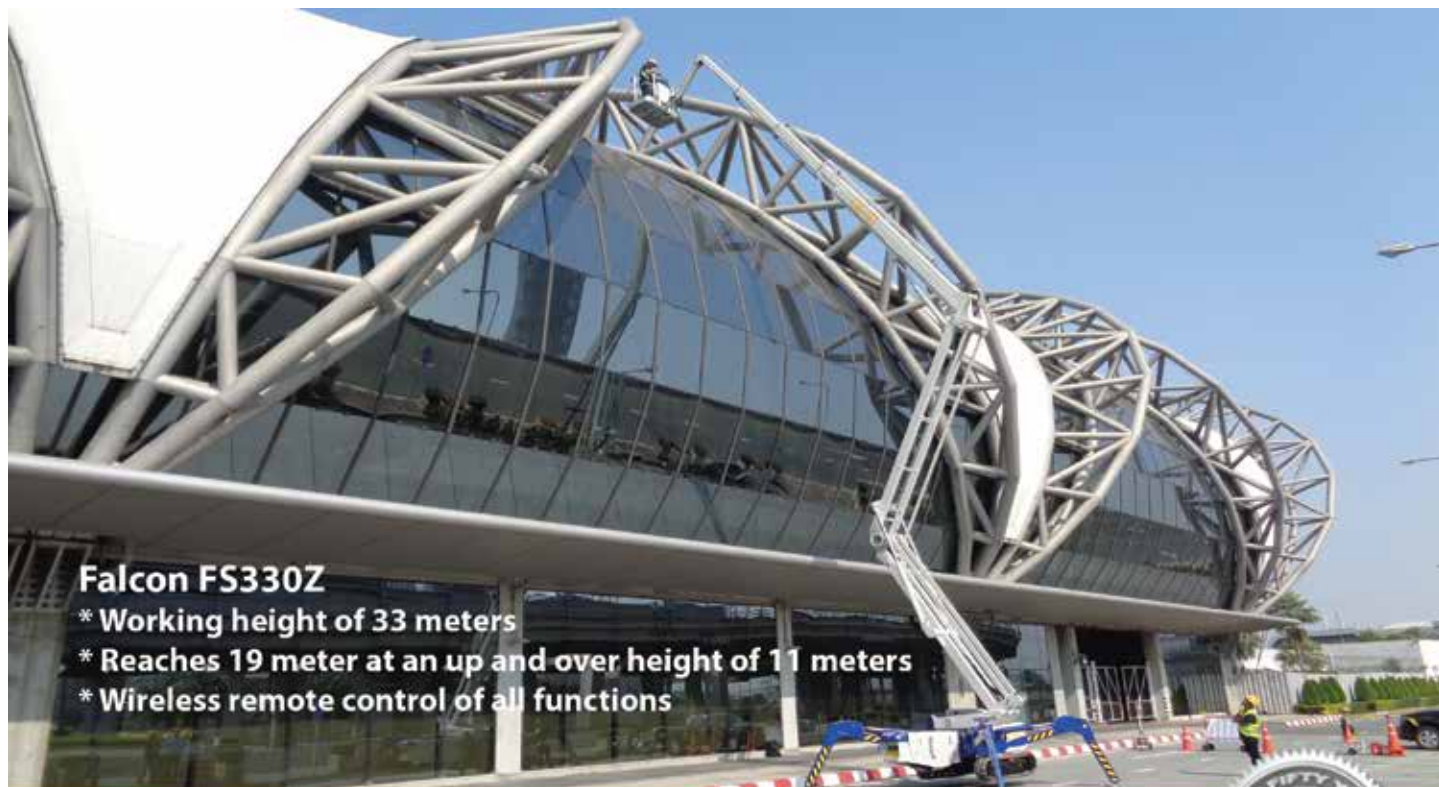
Power Towers was one of the first manufacturers in the sector launching its first product - the Power Tower - in spring 2007 just a year after the Pop-Up scissor lift was unveiled. 2006 to 2008 were buoyant years in the UK access market and proved perfect timing for such a new concept also helped by coming just after new European work at height regulations came into law with the UK's HSE initially seeming to be ruling out the use of step ladders. With solid rental returns for this tiny machine, sales exploded and sucked in a large number of new manufacturers, all of which helped promote the concept. Growth in other markets has been slower as local safety authorities were less rigid in their adoption of the work at height rules, and rental companies were slower to take the tiny machines seriously. That is now changing rapidly. One surprising are the concept has taken off is the Middle East, where British contractors have insisted on their use, not only for safety reasons, but also due to the efficiency benefits that they have seen.

A swing back towards self-propelled

With dramatic improvements in performance, reliability and battery life on electric drive platforms and the introduction of self-propelled versions of low level push-around lifts there is a shift back towards self-propelled lifts, although the arrival of even smaller manually operated lifts, such as the Power Towers Pecolift, has added further growth impetus to the market. One area where battery powered lifts are a challenge are applications in hazardous environments where there is the risk of fire or explosion. Companies such as UK-based The Access Platform Company which started in 2011 have built up solid sales growth by offering completely manual platforms up to six metres which have no batteries, electrics or pumps resulting in lifts that are quick and easy to set up and operate and require very little maintenance. However only a few manufacturers have followed this minimalist path while an increasing number are offering powered push-around scissor lifts. These products do make a good alternative to step



A Power Towers Pecolift



Falcon FS330Z

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- * Wireless remote control of all functions

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The Sidewinder 300 from The Access Platform Company has a working height of up to five metres and no wires, hydraulics, pumps, motors or batteries



ladders, podiums and small towers while the self-propelled versions of these tiny scissors with working heights of up to five metres 'knock on the door' of the established 12ft electric scissor/mast lift market.

'Powered push-arounds' are generally ultra-compact with low maximum floor point loads allowing them to work almost anywhere, even on raised floors - and ride in just about any elevator. One of the key features of the 12ft mast lift when it first came out was its low weight and compact dimensions however in recent years these platforms have developed middle-age spread, putting on weight from around 600kg to well over 800kg, which can cause elevator and floor loading problems.



US-based Custom Equipment already produces a 12ft ANSI machine, the HB1230 that weighs 730kg and is as compact as the 12ft mast lift, while offering a bigger platform

12ft scissors?

It can only be a matter of time before the 10ft platform height lifts - available from the likes of Bravi, Dingli, Pop-Up, Youngman, Snorkel, Iteco, Power Towers and Faraone to name just a few muscle in on the 12ft market with machines that weigh under 600kg, with platform capacities between 150kg and 200kg, albeit with a marginally lower height. US-based Custom Equipment already produces a 12ft ANSI machine, the HB1230 that weighs 730kg, and is as compact as the 12ft mast lift, while offering a bigger platform.



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The Spin-Go has a working height of 4.2 metres but weighs just 230kg and is only 1,155mm long and 730mm wide, with a stowed height of 1.5 metres



The JLG Liftpod



Dingli JCPT 3.0

New stock pickers

While the powered push-around scissor might be knocking on the door of the mast lift market, an increasingly interesting growth area has been stock picker version of these lifts. This year has seen a batch of new stock picker machines from the likes of Airo, ATN, Faraone and Haulotte. Whether these are compact and light enough to compete with products such as the Bravi Spin-Go remains to be seen. The Spin-Go is based on the company's Caddy self-propelled stock picking lift, but offers a lower working height of 4.2 metres but

weighs just 230kg and is only 1,155mm long and 730mm wide, with a stowed height of 1.5 metres. Platform capacity is 130kg with a further 90kg on the elevating tray and 112kg placed on the chassis storage deck. Bravi says that a number of its major retail customers for the Caddy asked for a product that was smaller, simpler and perhaps most importantly less expensive, in order to help them introduce the powered access concept to smaller stores to eliminate ladders and steps from their premises completely.

Steps with a lift

A sort of an in-between, semi powered stock picker is produced by Australian-based Custom Ladder Company, with its Stockmaster Lift-Truk. The LT 07E is a cross between a set of podium steps with a two metre high platform and a stock picker with powered lift shelf. It is pushed around by hand, but a box or load weighing up to 60kg can be lifted or lowered at the push of a button to a height of three metres - manual versions, using a hand crank, can lift up to almost five metres. The manufacturer says that it is designed to be a simpler competitor to the Crown Wave platform, costing about half the price.

A new Crown

German-built Crown Wave WAV 50 (Work Assist Vehicle) may be twice the price of the Australian Stockmaster, but it is streets ahead when it comes to looks and features. Looking more like a powered JLG Liftpod it is available in two platform heights - 2.13 and 2.99 metres - both with 90kg load tray and 115kg load deck capacity. The stylish platform would look at home in high class offices and hotels, typically replacing rolling ladders in maintenance and warehouse/industrial applications.

The unit has a working height up to five metres and a maximum speed of six kilometres an hour. Measuring 1,525mm long by 750mm wide it some nice features including the Intelligent Control system which manages vehicle travel, steering, braking, lift/lower and the display extending the battery charge intervals which are carried out by

plugging into a standard 230 volt socket. The unit can turn in its own length, while regenerative braking is automatic when throttle speed is reduced or when the operator removes a hand or foot from the controls. Gates must be closed to travel or raise the platform when it is above half a metre, while travel speed is reduced gradually as the platform elevates. Maintenance free batteries are standard and an optional handset can be used to customises vehicle performance and troubleshoot.



The Airo V6 E has 5.5m working height, is quick at six kph and weighs 780kg



The Crown Wave WAV 50 is available in two platform heights - 2.13 and 2.99 metres - both with 90kg load tray and 115kg load deck capacity

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Stock pickers - how the Haulotte, Airo, ATN and Crown units compare

	Airo V6 E	Crown Wav 50-118	Star 6 Picker	ATN 660 RC Picking
Working height	5.5m	5.0m	6.0m	6.6m
Platform height	3.5m	3.0m	4.0m	4.6m
Lift capacity	Op 120kg Tray 90kg Deck 130kg	Op 135kg Tray 90kg Deck 115kg	180kg	200kg max
Length x width x height	1.37 x 0.81 x 1.51m	1.5 x 0.75 x 1.39m	1.5 x 0.76 x 1.65m	1.64 x 0.78 x 1.96m
Drive speed max	6 kph	6 kph	5kph	3.6kph
Weight	780kg	590kg	820kg	980kg
Power	24v - 180 amp/h	24v -195 amp/h	24v - 185 amp/h	24v - 185 amp/h



The Haulotte Star 6 Picker seen for the first time at Intermat

Two French manufacturers - Haulotte and ATN - launched new small electric mast lift machines earlier this year. Both the Haulotte Star 6 and the ATN Pifaf 660 also come in a stock picking version. At just over 15ft, the ATN challenges the market opened up by Skyjacks 16ft SJ16 mast lift, while the Haulotte however is unashamedly a copy of the UpRight TM12 - now

the Snorkel TM12 - joining JLG and Skyjack, both of which have recognised that this seems to be what the market wants. The Airo V6 E falls in between - bigger than the Crown, but short on working height compared to the Haulotte or ATN. Three versions of the Pifaf 660C are available - the Standard, Plus and Picking, each using the same structure but with the Plus offering a slide-out deck extension and 80kg load area on the Picking version.



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Bravi Leonardo HD



Iteco Easy Up 5SP



Skyjack SJ16

Explosion proof equipment

Another growth area is explosion proof lifts for use in hazardous areas. We mentioned The Access Platform Company earlier and how it has found some success because its lifts are basic and easy to maintain. Because of its minimalist approach, many of them are purchased for use in hazardous situations where they reduce the risk of explosion.

Several companies are offering

explosion-proof access equipment including Airo in Italy, and Man Lift Manufacturing in the USA. Airo is able to modify its equipment - the mechanical, hydraulic, electric and electronic systems - making the lift safe to operate in areas with a risk of fire or explosion. It can do this by housing the battery which in a corrosion resistant steel box, explosion-proofing audible devices, using a pneumatic horn

and explosion-proof rotating beacons. Electric motors are also enclosed and constantly monitored by thermal sensors that stop the platform movements when the safety temperature is exceeded. All electromechanical devices - such as relays, fuses etc - and power actuators - emergency switches, power supplies - that can cause sparks or arcs are also enclosed in metal casings and the solenoid valve heads and battery terminals are sealed with protective resins.

Man Lift in the USA will explosion-proof all types of standard lifts and material handling equipment, including scissor and boom lifts, mast lifts, forklifts etc. It will take machines made by the major

manufacturers and not only modify them for the specific application, but also provide all the required test data and certification documents.

With new and improved self-propelled and push around lifts, new mast lifts and mast booms, not to mention small narrow aisle boom lifts, there is almost certain to be a right machine for the job, no matter how challenging it is.



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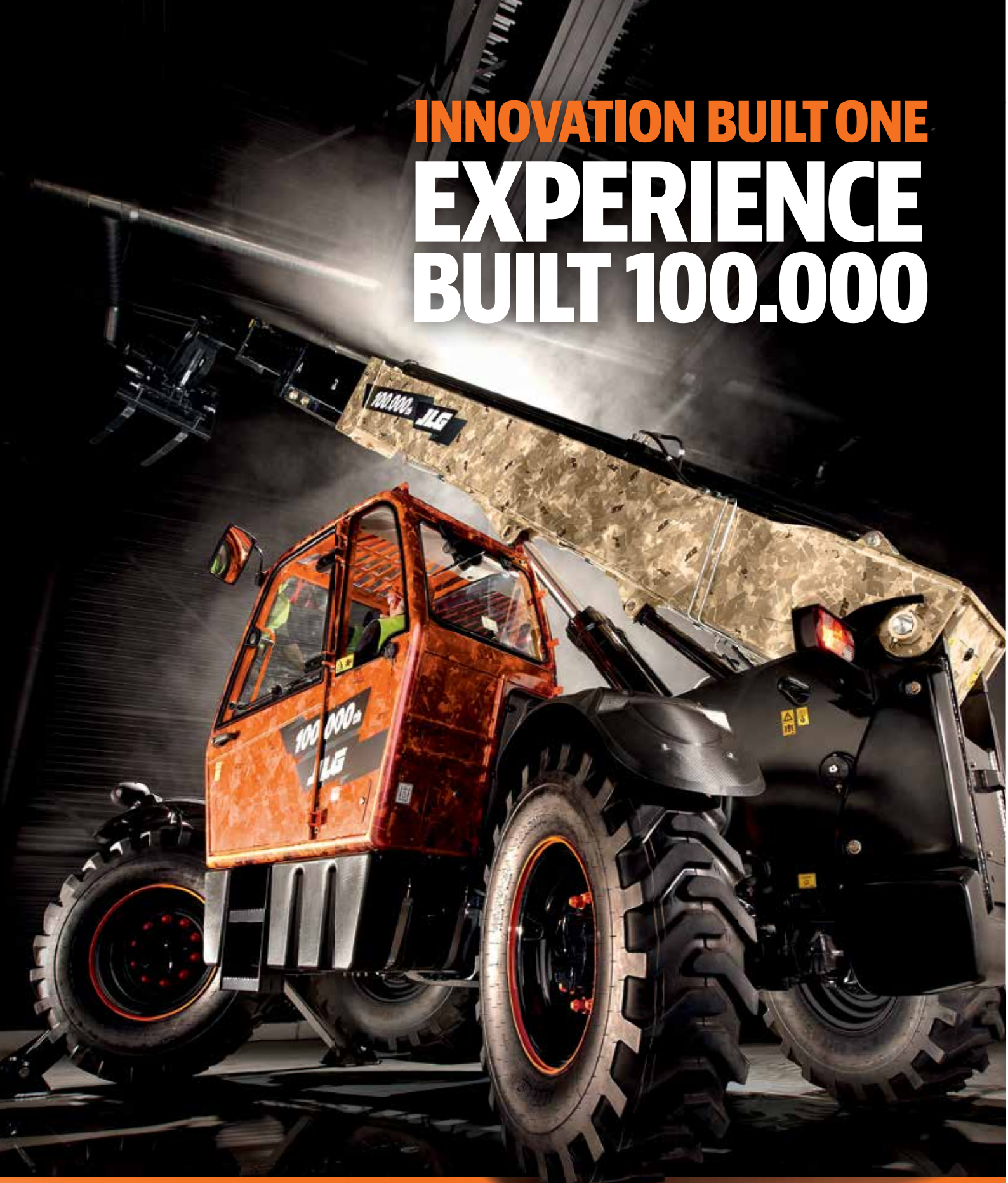
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